

Canal Building Becomes a Source of Hope



Photo by USAID

Afghan men help build canal in Fatmasti Valley.

“Men would come every day to work and be happy to work because we are making our land better and we have a chance to begin again.”

—A returned refugee

Most of the fields in the Fatmasti Valley of Bamyan Province in Afghanistan were not cultivated for years after war and drought forced most of the people in the valley to flee to Iran. Since agriculture is a way of life for 70% of Afghanistan's people, building the canal and other infrastructure were key to re-establishing this crucial source of income.

USAID provided a grant to build a 2,500 meter stone and masonry canal, which provided much needed water to cultivate crops and encouraged families to return to the province. The USAID project is benefiting more than 600 families by providing water to irrigate an area commonly referred to as the "hunger belt." In addition, 350 men earned salaries to help build the canal.

An older man who had returned recently to Afghanistan first sent two of his sons from Iran to Fatmasti to "find the truth with their own eyes," that the Taliban were really gone. Now working his fields for the first time in years, he speaks proudly of how he and his sons helped build the canal. "Men would come every day to work and be happy to work because we are making our land better and we have a chance to begin again."